



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Voyageurs National Park

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Voyageurs National Park News Release

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CLOSED BALD EAGLE NESTING AREAS REOPENED IN VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK

Each year since 1992, park managers have temporarily closed the land and water areas around active bald eagle nests to visitor use during their critical nesting periods. The closures have been based on recommendations of bald eagle researchers from across the U.S. to land management agencies and in accordance with federal laws protecting bald eagles. After the young leave the nest, which usually occurs by mid August, the areas are again reopened for public use.

The areas around 12 of the park's 33 bald eagle nesting sites occupied by breeding pairs temporarily closed to campers and other human activities in early May are now reopened. Four of the park's 235 developed visitor use sites were affected by the temporary closures.

The reopened developed visitor use sites are:

- Kabetogama Lake- Yoder Island (K37) houseboat site
- Namakan Lake -Hamilton Island East (N11) campsite
- Rainy Lake- Skipper Rock Island (R45) and Sand Bay South (R25) houseboat sites

The reopened eight undeveloped areas are:


- Kabetogama Lake -East Northland Island, North Wood Duck Island Beach, Pine Island South, Richie Island, West Sphunge Island Inlet, and West Zollner Island
- Rainy Lake- North Diamond Island and Red Rock Island

Sixty seven bald eagle nests were identified within the park boundary this breeding season while conducting aerial and on water surveys to determine the number, location and reproductive success of nesting pairs. Adult pairs were observed at 33 of the nests. Twenty nine of the 33 breeding pairs were actively involved in incubating- compared to 26 in 2007, 31 in 2006, 29 in 2005, 27 pairs in 2003 and 2004, 28 pairs in 2001 and 2002, 25 pairs in 2000, and 22 pairs in 1999.

(more)

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Reproductive success and productivity in the park's breeding population this year (70%) was greater than in 2007 (68%) and 2006 (56%). Twenty three breeding pairs raised 34 young this year compared to nineteen pairs with 27 young in 2007 and 18 pairs with 26 young in 2006. The number of young fledged per breeding pair was 1.03 this season compared to 0.96 in 2007 and 0.81 in 2006. Only six of the actively nesting pairs failed to raise at least one young to the fledging stage of development compared to 9 in 2007 and 14 in 2006. Park wildlife biologists were pleasantly surprised that the breeding population's reproductive success and productivity was so good after the unusually snowy, rainy and cold spring weather the birds experienced.

There has been a steady increase in active nesting pairs in VNP during the past 37 breeding seasons. That trend along with an increase in the number of young fledged annually in the park is good news for both the eagles and the park's visitors. The park's 66 adult breeding eagles with their 34 young combined with an estimated 50 non-breeding 1, 2 and 3 year old sub-adult bald eagles, enables visitors a great opportunity to see and enjoy many of the approximately 150 eagles that live and breed throughout VNP in the summer.

Acting Superintendent Raoul Lufbery said, "Overall, we believe that by reducing the adverse potential of human/eagle interactions around our active bald eagle nesting sites we have allowed greater nesting success of park eagles. Our management goal is to help ensure the continued reproductive success and sustainability of the park's population of bald eagles. Park visitors and neighbors play a very important role in protecting nesting eagles and other birds here. We really appreciate their cooperation with our management efforts. In this way, we have increased the access to more eagles by our visitors and neighbors."

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